

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 35 are pending in the present application. In an office action mailed January 2, 2002 (Paper No. 12), claims 1 through 15, 23, 28 through 29, 30 through 31, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,924,074 granted to Evans (hereinafter "*Evans*") in view of U.S. Patent 5,899,998 granted to McGauley et al. (hereinafter "*McGauley*"). Claims 16, 17, 19 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Evans* in light of U.S. Patent 6,305,377 to Portwood et al. (hereinafter "*Portwood*"). Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Evans* in light of *Portwood* and further in view of *McGauley*. The rejection of claims 20 through 22 was not addressed. Claims 24 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Evans*. Claims 25, 26, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Evans*. Claim 34 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Evans* and *Portwood* in view of U.S. Patent 6,370,841 granted to Chudy et al. (hereinafter *Chudy*). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Applicants appreciate the telephone interview with the Examiner on January 17, 2003, and the invitation to submit amendments to better define the invention. The amendments to claims 1, 10, 23, 24, 27, and 29 are believed to place the claims in condition for allowance. Entry of these amendments and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

A two-month response date to the final rejection was due March 2, 2003, which fell on a Sunday. Therefore, this Amendment After Final is timely submitted on Monday, March 3, 2003. An advisory action prior to the three-month no-fee deadline is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks and for various other reasons readily apparent, Applicants submit that all of the claims now present are allowable, and withdrawal of the

rejection and a Notice of Allowance are courteously solicited.

If any impediment to the allowance of the claims remains after consideration of this amendment, and such impediment could be alleviated during a telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (214) 969-4669 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Applicants believe that no additional fee is due at this time. If any applicable fee or refund has been overlooked, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee or credit any refund to the deposit account of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P., No. 01-0657.

Respectfully submitted,



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